

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A sealing material comprising a coating film comprising at least one kind of a metal or a metallic compound selected from the group consisting of metals, metal oxides, metal nitrides, metal carbides and complex thereof on the whole or a part of the surface of a substrate comprising a soft material having a shore D hardness of at most 75 and a shore A hardness of 40 to 100,

wherein the thickness of the coating film is 0.005 to 1 μm ,

wherein the soft material is a fluorine polymer material, and

wherein the soft material and the coating film are closely adhered with each other at a degree of adhesivity where the critical breaking load is at least 25 mN, which is measured with the microscratch test under test conditions of a curvature radius of diamond stylus of 5.0 μm ; an elastic arm of 146.64 g/mm; a stage angle of 3.0°; a measurement speed of 10.0 $\mu\text{m/s}$; a load applying speed of 75.31 mN/mm; an excitation width of 79 μm ; and an excitation frequency of 30 Hz.

2. (original): The sealing material of Claim 1, wherein the soft material is an elastomer.

3. (canceled).

4. (previously presented): The sealing material of Claim 1, wherein the soft material is a fluorine rubber.

5. (canceled).

6. (previously presented): The sealing material of Claim 1, wherein the soft material and the coating film are closely adhered with each other at the degree of adhesivity where the number of peeling between the soft material and the coating film is at most 50/100, which is measured by the cross-cut tape adhesion test (1 mm square/100 pieces) according to JIS K5600.

7. (canceled).

8. (previously presented): The sealing material of Claim 1, wherein all the rates of decrease in weight of sheet sample having a thickness of 2 mm and a size of 10 mm x 35 mm are at most 1 % by weight at irradiating respective plasmas of O₂, CF₄, and NF₃ under O₂ plasma and CF₄ plasma irradiation conditions of a gas flow rate of 16 SCCM; a pressure of 20 mTorr; an output power of 800 W; and an irradiation time of 30 minutes, and under NF₃ plasma irradiation conditions of NF₃/Ar of 1 SLM/1 SLM; a pressure of 3 Torr; an irradiation time of 2 hours; and a temperature of 150°C.

9. (previously presented): The sealing material of Claim 1, wherein the coating film is formed by a vacuum film forming process.

10. (original): The sealing material of Claim 9, wherein the vacuum film forming process is an ion plating process.

11. (previously presented): The sealing material of Claim 1, which is used for equipment for manufacturing a liquid crystal or a semiconductor.

12. (previously presented): A liquid crystal or semiconductor manufacturing equipment which has the sealing material of Claim 1.

13. (currently amended): A process for preparing a sealing material comprising a step of coating the whole or a part of the surface of a substrate comprising of a soft material having the shore D hardness of at most 75 and the shore A hardness of 40 to 100 with at least one kind

of a metal or a metallic compound selected from the group consisting of metals, metal oxides, metal nitrides, metal carbides and complexes thereof by ion plating process in a thickness of 0.005 to 1 μm .